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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
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UPDATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ARGENTINA

Since publication of the Country Reports on Human Rights there have been the following human rights developments in Argentina:

- - On February 20, 1983 the Argentina Government announced that national elections would be held on Oct. 30, 1983 and the new civilian government would be inaugurated on Jan. 30, 1984.

- - In 1983 the GOA released some 30 PEN prisoners into supervised parole. Another 55, who were on parole, have been granted complete freedom. This brings the number of PEN prisoners down to about 199. The GOA has stated that all PEN prisoners will either be released or remanded for trial by the end of 1983.

- - On April 15, 15,000 people participated in the largest human rights demonstration in Argentine history. The demonstration was entirely peaceful.

- - On April 15, the Administrative Court of Appeals upheld a lower court decision ordering the GOA to return all confiscated issues of the magazine "La Semana", which had carried an article critical of the military. The Court said that the State of Siege, which has been in force for over eight years, cannot be justified under the present circumstances in which "a trend towards institutional normality is evident." The Court also expressed its support for freedom of the press. (This is the second time in four months that "La Semana" has beaten the Government in court).

- - On April 13 a federal judge paid a surprise visit to a prison to investigate allegations of mistreatment of prisoners. In his nine hour visit he reportedly took testimony from 30 prisoners.

- - The one major negative development, apart from the GOA's seizure on two occasions of issues of "La Semana", was the disappointing quality of the Government's report on the disappeared, released on April 28th. The report was a self-serving justification of the actions of the Argentine security forces that led to the disappearance of thousands of Argentine civilians. The initial reaction in Argentina to the report has been strongly negative.

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